

**PROCEDURES 351  
FEDERAL BENEFITS AND OTHER PUBLIC FUNDS**

**February 8, 2019 – PT 2019.05**

**TABLE OF CONTENTS**

<b>Section</b>	<b>Page</b>
351.1 Purpose	1
351.2 Definitions	1
351.3 Assisting Families in Securing Benefits	1
351.4 Securing Benefits for Children	1
a) Federal Benefits	1
1) Social Security (SSA)	2
A) Eligibility	2
B) Additional Eligibility Criteria	2
C) Application Process and Ongoing Eligibility	3
2) Railroad Retirement Benefits	5
A) Eligibility	5
B) Additional Eligibility Criteria	5
C) Application Process and Ongoing Eligibility	5
3) Veterans Administration Benefits	7
A) Eligibility	7
B) Additional Eligibility Criteria	7
C) Application Process and Ongoing Eligibility	7
4) Black Lung (Miner's) Benefits	8
A) Eligibility	8
B) Benefits	9
C) Application Process	9
5) Supplemental Security Income (SSI)	9
A) Eligibility	9
B) General Criteria Considered in Screening Cases	10
C) Application Process and Ongoing Eligibility	11
6) Appeals	11
b) Benefits from Other State Agencies (state and federal funded)	12
1) TANF and SNAP	12
2) Medical Services	13
c) State Board of Education	13
Appendix A – Title IV-E Foster Care and Title IXX Medicaid Category 98	15
Appendix B – Child Support	19

**PROCEDURES 351, FEDERAL BENEFITS AND OTHER PUBLIC FUNDS**  
**February 8, 2019 – PT 2019.05**

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## FEDERAL BENEFITS AND OTHER PUBLIC FUNDS

February 8, 2019 – PT 2019.05

### == 351.1 Purpose

### == 351.2 Definitions

### 351.3 Assisting Families in Securing Benefits

By becoming familiar with the various federal, state and local programs that are available, staff can recognize the potential eligibility of the families they serve and appropriately advise them as to the benefits for which they may qualify and how and where to apply. The following section, Securing Benefits for Children, contains descriptions of major programs and benefits. By familiarizing themselves with this section, staff can obtain a broad, general knowledge of the benefits, eligibility requirements and process for making applications.

Staff can also be of assistance to families by being actively supportive during the application process. This can include assistance in filling out forms and questionnaires, interpreting various requirements, help in obtaining needed documentation and verifications, and acting as an advocate on the families' behalf.

**Note:** It is critical that the worker identify the child's social security number to request or verify if the child/youth is entitled to the benefits mentioned in these Procedures. See **Procedures 327, Guardianship Services; Appendix G – Application for Social Security Number**. If needing certified copies of birth records to obtain the child's Social Security number and to obtain federal financial benefits on behalf of the child see **Procedures 302, Services Delivered by the Department; Section 302.390, Placement Services (a)(3) Verification of Birth**.

### 351.4 Securing Benefits for Children

#### a) Federal Benefits

This section is to be used with Rule and **Procedures 353, Children's Accounts**.

Eligibility Criteria in General: Dependency is the main criterion for establishing eligibility for Social Security, Veterans Administration, Railroad Retirement and Black Lung (Miner's benefits). Eligibility for Supplemental Security Income (SSI) is determined by disability and income.

One may be eligible for Federal benefits if any of the following conditions exist:

- Parent(s), guardian or legal custodian is deceased, disabled or worked in a coal mine.
- Child is disabled.
- Parent(s) is/was a veteran.
- Parent(s) worked for a railroad.
- Guardian or Legal custodian appointed.
- Benefits are currently being received.

**FEDERAL BENEFITS AND OTHER PUBLIC FUNDS**  
**February 8, 2019 – PT 2019.05**

As stated in **Procedures 353**, Children's Accounts Unit of Federal Financial Participation - will manage any monies received on behalf of DCFS child/youth in care. In most cases, this money is used to reimburse DCFS for the costs of care. In order to establish eligibility for these benefits or to transfer the benefits to the Department, the caseworkers need to be aware of the various benefit types so potential eligible child/youth in care can be identified.

Caseworkers can notify Federal Financial Participation or the contractors responsible for applying for benefits when they are aware of circumstances that could impact the eligibility of a child/youth in care. Caseworkers are expected to assist in the application process by providing documentation and obtaining the child/youth in care signature when necessary.

Any referrals or questions related to a child's eligibility for the various federal programs, should be directed to the Federal Financial Participation Unit Benefits Application Coordinator at 217-524-6186.

The following is a description of each benefit, the eligibility criteria for each and application and reporting process.

**1) Social Security (SSA)**

**A) Eligibility**

If a child/youth is or was financially dependent on their natural parent, adoptive parent, stepparent, aunt, uncle, grandparents, step-grandparents, guardian or custodian and if that person should die, retire, or become disabled, the child and his family may become eligible for Social Security benefits under Title II of the Social Security Act.

**B) Additional Eligibility Criteria**

- i) Student Benefit: Benefits continue beyond age 18 if the youth is still in high school, but only until age 19 or graduation date.
- ii) Disabled Adult Child: Disabled Adult Child (DAC) application should be pursued if a child is between the ages of 18-22, has a disabling condition as defined by SSA, and is eligible to receive SSA Title II benefits from a parent's social security record.
- iii) Adopted Child: Benefits for an eligible minor child may be continued following consummation of an adoption.

## FEDERAL BENEFITS AND OTHER PUBLIC FUNDS

February 8, 2019 – PT 2019.05

### C) Application Process and Ongoing Eligibility

- i) As part of the initial Title IV-E Foster Care Eligibility and Medicaid determination, children already in receipt of SSA are identified by the Eligibility Determination Unit in Springfield (if the child's SSN is available) and form SSA-11 is completed by the Eligibility Determination Unit to begin the change of representative payee.
- ii) If a worker becomes aware of a child or youth in custody of DCFS with a deceased or disabled parent, they can contact Federal Financial Participation (FFP) Benefits Coordinator at 217-524-6186 who will begin the application process with SSA.
- iii) The caseworker should anticipate that FFP will need a certified copy of the birth certificate to establish the relationship between the child and the deceased or disabled parent. In some situations the finding of paternity is needed. Without the necessary documentation of relationship, they will not be able to establish eligibility for SSA benefits.
- iv) SSA will determine if the child is eligible for benefits based on the parent's work record and the parent's disability or death. If eligible for a benefit, SSA will send the benefit to Children's Accounts where it will be used to offset costs of care.
- v) The benefit will continue (as long as the parent status remains the same) until the child reaches age 18. As the youth reaches age 18, Children's Accounts Unit will request information, from the worker, related to the youth's attendance in high school and ability to handle funds. If the youth remains in high school, the benefits can continue up to age 19 or graduation, whichever happens first. If benefits are to continue, it is SSA's preference that the youth become their own payee. The caseworker should assist the youth in opening a bank account and interacting with the local SSA.
- vi) When a child with SSA benefits gets adopted, the eligibility will continue and the adoptive parents should contact their local Social Security Office to become the payee. The amount of the benefit will not be impacted by the adoptive parent's financial situation.
- vii) When a child with SSA benefits is returned to the parent, the parent will receive a letter from Children's Accounts to take with them to their local Social Security Administration Office to have the payee changed. **Note:** Depending on how early in the month the change in payee is requested, the parent may not receive the benefit for a

## FEDERAL BENEFITS AND OTHER PUBLIC FUNDS

February 8, 2019 – PT 2019.05

couple of months. Any money received in Children's Accounts for periods of time after the child returned to the parent will be returned to SSA who will then forward to the new payee (**This can also take an additional couple of months**). Workers should help prepare the parent for meeting the child's needs without the immediate assistance of the SSA benefit.

- viii) Changes to be Reported: It is of utmost importance to report to the Social Security Administration certain changes in the status of a child/youth for whom DCFS is payee of Social Security benefits, as well as reporting other vital information. Timely updates to DCFS computer systems informs Children's Accounts who will then notify SSA of these changes. Delays in updating DCFS systems with information or a child/youth's permanency will result in delays in the transfer of payee. Contact Children's Accounts Unit with any questions or updates.

### CHANGES TO REPORT FOR TITLE II PROGRAM – SOCIAL SECURITY BENEFITS

- |                                 |    |   |
|---------------------------------|----|---|
| 1. Custody changes              | -- | Leaves the Department's care or custody.  |
| 2. Address Change               |    | Moves, relocates or needs to update mailing address.  |
| 3. Change of marital status     | -- | Marriage of any beneficiary.  |
| 4. Death                        | -- | Death of any beneficiary.   |
| 5. Change in school attendance  | -- | Student 18 or over graduates, stops attending school, reduces school attendance below full-time, or changes schools.  |
| 5. Work                         | -- | If a beneficiary works and earns over Substantial Gainful Activity (SGA) levels for that year. See <a href="http://www.ssa.gov">www.ssa.gov</a> for the most up to date information on SGA. |
| 6. Disabled person goes to work | -- | If a disabled beneficiary goes to work or the condition improves such that he/she is able to work.  |

**Note:** Further information regarding Social Security and how it distinguishes from Supplemental Security Income SSI can be found on the SSA's PDF brochure through the link below: <https://www.ssa.gov/sf/FactSheets/aianssavssfinalrev.pdf>

## FEDERAL BENEFITS AND OTHER PUBLIC FUNDS

February 8, 2019 – PT 2019.05

### 2) Railroad Retirement Benefits

#### A) Eligibility

The primary condition of eligibility for Railroad Retirement benefits is: children of deceased railroad employees, provided that the employee had 10 years (120 actual service months) of employment, and had a current connection with the railroad industry (meaning that during the 2½ years before death, the employee had one year of railroad employment) and the children meet the following requirements:

- i) Under age 18
- ii) Unmarried
- iii) Dependent upon employee

#### B) Additional Eligibility Criteria

- i) Disabled Child: May be considered disabled upon filing of initial application; however, there is no time limit for such application.
- ii) Student Benefits: Monthly benefits are available to students under age 18, if the youth remains in high school the benefits can continue up to age 19 or high school graduation, whichever happens first.
- iii) Adopted Child: Benefits for an eligible minor child may be continued following consummation of an adoption.

#### C) Application Process and Ongoing Eligibility

- i) Initial (death of a railroad employee): Region/field staff should review all incoming cases and determine if a child is potentially eligible for Railroad Retirement benefits according to the above stated criteria. When it appears the child may be eligible, the worker should notify Federal Financial Participation –Benefit Coordinator at 217-524-6186. The worker should anticipate they will have to provide information related to the current payee and/or the individual who worked for the Railroad and documentation of how the child is related to that individual.

The Federal Financial Participation Unit initiates correspondence with the Railroad Retirement Board Office, submitting the above information and requesting a determination regarding eligibility for benefits.

## FEDERAL BENEFITS AND OTHER PUBLIC FUNDS

February 8, 2019 – PT 2019.05

- ii) Disabled Child: Eligibility requirements for "disabled child" benefits are similar to those of Social Security. Benefits may continue after age 18 if such disability was present and established prior to age 22.
- iii) Student Benefits: Children receiving Railroad Retirement Survivors' benefits are eligible for student benefits until the youth finishes high school or reaches age 19, whichever happens first. Payment will be continued during a period of four weeks or less in which the student is not in school, such as vacation, if he/she was attending full-time or intends to return to school full-time when the period is over.

Three months prior to a child's 18th birthday, the Railroad Retirement Board notifies the child that benefits will stop effective his 18th birthday unless he is totally disabled or is a full-time student. If the youth informs the Railroad Retirement Board that he/she is a student, then an Application for Child's Insurance must be completed and returned by the student to the Railroad Retirement Board.

- iv) Changes to be Reported: Timely updates to DCFS computer systems informs Children's Accounts who will then notify Railroad Retirement of changes in the status of a youth. Delays in updating DCFS systems with information or a youth's permanency will result in delays in the transfer of payee. Contact Children's Accounts Unit with any questions or updates.
- v) Adopted Child: Railroad Retirement Board regulations provide that benefits for an eligible minor child may be continued following consummation of an adoption, although application for a change of payee is discretionary with the adoptive parent(s).

The adoptive parents will be mailed a letter from Children's Accounts with the Railroad Retirement Board claim number of the deceased employee. The adoptive parent(s) should send this number together with a copy of the Decree of Adoption and a request for a change of payee to:

Railroad Retirement Board  
844 Rush Street  
Chicago, Illinois 60611

## FEDERAL BENEFITS AND OTHER PUBLIC FUNDS

February 8, 2019 – PT 2019.05

### 3) Veterans Administration Benefits

#### A) Eligibility

Primary Condition: Dependency or Indemnity Compensation may be payable to a minor child of a deceased or disabled veteran upon whom the child was or is financially dependent.

#### B) Additional Eligibility Criteria

- i) Disabled Child: A veteran's child who, prior to age 18, is established to be permanently incapable of self-support because of mental defect or physical disability may continue to receive benefits thereafter as long as such condition exists, or until the child/youth in care marries.
- ii) Student Benefits: Monthly benefits continue to age 22 if the child is regularly and continuously enrolled in any type of school (i.e. high school, college, vocational, or alternative programs) on a full-time basis.
- iii) Adopted Child: Benefits for an eligible minor child may be continued following consummation of an adoption.

#### C) Application Process and Ongoing Eligibility

- i) Initial: The worker shall notify FFP Benefits Coordinator at 217-524-6186 of any children of deceased or disabled veterans. The worker should anticipate the need to provide information about the veteran and the relationship of the child to the veteran.

The FFP will submit the information to the Veterans Administration Regional Office, for a determination of eligibility. **Note: This process can take several months.**

- ii) Disabled Child: The worker should inform FFP of any physical or mental disability prior to the youth's 18<sup>th</sup> birthday.

The Veterans Administration will notify FFP if any additional information is required in order to have the youth declared a "helpless child" and therefore entitled to further benefits.

- iii) Student Benefits: The Veterans Administration notifies the Guardianship Administrator four (4) months before the youth's 18th birthday that monthly benefits will automatically terminate unless the youth continues in school after the 18th birthday. The

## FEDERAL BENEFITS AND OTHER PUBLIC FUNDS

February 8, 2019 – PT 2019.05

Guardianship Administrator, through the Children's Accounts Unit, must apply for benefits prior to the 18th birthday of a youth who intends to continue his studies, so that payment will not be interrupted. The worker should anticipate the need to provide documentation and facilitate obtaining the signature of the youth on any required forms.

Monthly educational benefits to which a youth is entitled after reaching 18 years are paid directly to the student.

Veterans Administration student benefits will be paid during the summer vacation months if there is not a break in the continuity of the youth's education; i.e., youth plans at the end of the school year to enroll in the fall.

iv) Changes to be reported: Timely updates to DCFS computer systems informs Children's Accounts who will then notify Veterans Administration of changes in the status of a youth. Delays in updating DCFS systems with information or a youth's permanency will result in delays in the transfer of payee. Contact Children's Accounts Unit with any questions or updates.

v) Adopted Child: Minor eligible children continue to be eligible for benefits following adoption.

The Children's Accounts Unit will furnish the veteran's claim number to the adoptive parents, who should forward this number together with a copy of the Decree of Adoption to the:

Veterans Administration Regional Office  
2122 W Taylor Street  
Chicago, IL 60612

The Veterans Administration will initiate correspondence with the adoptive parents in order to finalize a change of payee of the child/youth's benefits.

#### 4) **Black Lung (Miner's) Benefits**

##### A) **Eligibility**

The only condition of eligibility for benefits is that the miner's lungs are physically damaged to such an extent that they are prevented from performing their usual job in the coal mine.

## FEDERAL BENEFITS AND OTHER PUBLIC FUNDS

February 8, 2019 – PT 2019.05

### B) Benefits

The amount of benefits is determined by the extent of the disability and the number of years of employment in the mines.

### C) Application Process

When the Social Security Administration checks their records for eligibility, their records also indicate whether or not there is eligibility for Black Lung benefits. If there is such eligibility, the Social Security Administration notifies the FFP.

**Note:** Timely updates to DCFS computer systems informs Children's Accounts who will then notify Black Lung of changes in the status of a youth. Delays in updating DCFS systems with information or a youth's permanency will result in delays in the transfer of payee. Contact Children's Accounts Unit with any questions or updates.

## 5) Supplemental Security Income (SSI)

### A) Eligibility

- i) Primary Condition: The purpose of the Supplemental Security Income (SSI) program is to provide benefits to anyone who is financially needy, under 65 and blind or disabled--for a basic cash income.

The current definition of disability in children is as follows:

*An individual under the age of 18 shall be considered disabled for the purposes of this program if that individual has a medically determinable physical or mental impairment, which results in marked and severe functional limitations, and which can be expected to result in death or which has lasted or can be expected to last for a continuous period of not less than 12 months.*

<http://www.socialsecurity.gov/disability/professionals/bluebook/general-info.htm>

- ii) Conditions of Eligibility are as follows:

- Blind -- vision no better than 20/200 with corrective lenses, or tunnel vision (limited to 20 degrees or less).
- Disabled -- a physical, mental or emotional impairment which is expected to last at least 12 months or result in death (see definition above)

## FEDERAL BENEFITS AND OTHER PUBLIC FUNDS

February 8, 2019 – PT 2019.05

### B) General Criteria Considered in Screening Cases

A child can be found disabled if he/she has a condition which meets the criteria outlined within SSA's Listing of Impairments found here:

<http://www.socialsecurity.gov/disability/professionals/bluebook/ChildhoodListings.htm>.

Some of the types of conditions to look for in screening include:

- |    |                              |   |
|----|------------------------------|---|
| 1. | Visual Handicap              | Blindness--total or partial   |
| 2. | Hearing Handicap             | Total or partial deafness   |
| 3. | Speech Handicap              | Total or partial loss of speech   |
| 4. | Physical Visible Handicap    | Use of prosthetic devices such as crutches, braces, canes, walkers, artificial limbs, etc.                  |
| 5. | Disease Conditions           | Epilepsy, Diabetes, Hemophilia, Heart Defects, Cerebral Palsy, Multiple Sclerosis, Muscular Dystrophy, etc. |
| 6. | Mental or Emotional Handicap | Intellectual disability, or mental illness, behavioral problems, functional disorders, etc.                 |
| 7. | Educational Factors          | Child attends special schools, special education classes, etc.  |

If a child appears to have indications of any of these conditions or symptoms a referral should be made immediately to the DCFS SSI Referral mailbox. Please include in the email the Name and ID of the youth as well as a brief description of why this youth might be eligible.

When a worker is aware that a child entering care is in receipt of SSI benefits, the social security number provided with case opening material is the most efficient way of notifying FFP. If the worker suspects SSI benefits are in place but does not know the SSN at time of case opening, contact the FFP Benefit Coordinator and send an email to the SSNCardRequest mailbox and receive instruction as to whether a certified copy of the birth certificate will be necessary.

## FEDERAL BENEFITS AND OTHER PUBLIC FUNDS

February 8, 2019 – PT 2019.05

### C) Application Process and Ongoing Eligibility

The caseworker is expected to respond to any and all requests for information, documentation and facilitate the youth's signature on any required forms. **Note: The SSI Application process can take 9-12 months for a final decision of eligibility.** Once a child/youth has been determined eligible there are a number of factors that will impact ongoing eligibility, but not limited to:

- Income or resources
- Eligibility for Title IV-E
- Type of placements

In addition, the SSA office routinely requires a Continuing Disability Review which involves the caseworker providing new documentation of the disability and depending on the age of the youth, various forms to be signed by the youth.

FFP provides the Guardian's Signature on all application forms so the caseworker is not required to obtain that separately.

When a youth approaches age 18, SSA requires a decision as to whether the youth meets the adult standard of eligibility. In addition to having a disability, there must also be evidence that the youth is unable to perform any employment. The worker should be prepared to document attempts at employment.

**Note:** Timely updates to DCFS computer systems informs Children's Accounts who will then notify SSI of changes in the status of a youth. Delays in updating DCFS systems with information or a youth's permanency will result in delays in the transfer of payee. Contact Children's Accounts Unit with any questions or updates.

### 6) Appeals

The Department has the right to appeal a negative decision regarding eligibility for Social Security benefits and Supplemental Security Income benefits.

Upon receipt of the Social Security Certificate of Award or the Supplemental Security Income Notice of Decision, the Children's Accounts Unit will forward a copy to the caseworker.

## FEDERAL BENEFITS AND OTHER PUBLIC FUNDS

February 8, 2019 – PT 2019.05

The SSA Advocacy vendor in partnership with child welfare worker in the field office will review the notice to determine whether the decision is acceptable. If it is not acceptable, the vendor should immediately notify the Children's Accounts Unit by memorandum. The vendor will facilitate the filing of the proper appeal paperwork with SSA. Speed is of the utmost importance inasmuch as the request must be filed within 60 days of the date the notice is received in the Children's Accounts Unit.

### b) **Benefits from Other State Agencies (state and federal funded)**

The following material describes other resources available for children and families. This is not an exhaustive list and serves only to provide information. A determination of eligibility for specific children or families will be decided by the responsible agency.

- Illinois Department of Human Services (DHS) and
- Department of Healthcare and Family Services (HFS)

General Description: The programs and services of the Department of Human Services (DHS) are designed to help ease or prevent poverty and to assist families in becoming self-sufficient. DHS's responsibilities include the eligibility determination and provision of financial aid, medical assistance and needed social services. HFS is responsible for the Medicaid Programs and Child Support Services, see **Appendices A and B** at the end of these Procedures. A list of HFS medical programs can be found on their website [www.hfsillinois.gov](http://www.hfsillinois.gov) or webpage <https://www.illinois.gov/hfs/Pages/default.aspx>.

#### 1) **TANF and SNAP**

Generally, a foster child should not need to access DHS resources while DCFS is the legal guardian. In fact, DCFS has a program to cover the equivalent of TANF for youth in care who have children. See **Procedures 302, Services Delivered by the Department; Appendix J - Pregnant and/or Parenting Program**. This allows the youth in care to avoid starting the 60 month clock on eligibility for TANF. In some circumstances foster parents can attempt to receive SNAP if the foster family meets the financial criteria. It is possible to exclude the foster child from their SNAP Unit. If the foster child is included in the SNAP Unit, the board payment is considered with other non-exempt income in the household.

**Note:** Should a youth in receipt of an Adoption or Guardianship subsidy become pregnant or parenting and need access to assistance for the baby, the Adoption worker should be contacted to coordinate the termination of the DCFS Medical Card to facilitate the youth's access to TANF and Medicaid benefits directly from DHS.

**FEDERAL BENEFITS AND OTHER PUBLIC FUNDS**  
**February 8, 2019 – PT 2019.05**

Other DHS Programs

DHS has the following Divisions:

- Alcohol and Substance Abuse
- Developmental Disabilities
- Family and Community Services (FCRC = SNAP, WIC, Cash Assistance and Medical)
- Mental Health
- Rehab Services

**2) Medical Services:**

For more specific information regarding medical assistance available to children for whom DCFS is responsible, refer to **Procedures 302, Services Delivered by the Department; Section 302.360, Health Care Services** and/or **Procedures 359, Authorized Child Care Payments; Section 359.90, Payments for Medical Care**. For regular application process, refer to **Appendix A** of these Procedures.

**c) State Board of Education**

The State Board of Education serves as a funding source and regulatory agency for the local school districts throughout the State. It is through the local districts that services are provided to children. Of the programs and services provided, the School Lunch Program and waiver of school fees have a significant impact on children served by the Department. See **Procedures 314, Educational Services; Section 314.100, Education Expenses (a) School Fees**. For more information on education benefits/programs see **Procedures 359, Authorized Child Care Payments; Section 359.75 Payments for Children's Education Expenses**, for other school related payments.

School Lunch Program: Children in foster care are categorically eligible for free lunches and milk if the school which they attend participates in the National School Lunch, Breakfast, or Special Milk Program. For reunified families, eligibility would be determined based on other criteria. For example, a child would be categorically eligible if she/he is in Head Start or lives in a household receiving SNAP or TANF benefits. Some communities qualify all their children based on the community's percentage of low-income children. Otherwise a determination is made for free or reduced lunches based on household income.

**FEDERAL BENEFITS AND OTHER PUBLIC FUNDS**  
**February 8, 2019 – PT 2019.05**

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**FEDERAL BENEFITS AND OTHER PUBLIC FUNDS**  
**February 8, 2019 – PT 2019.05**

**Appendix A – Title IV-E Foster Care and Title XIX Medicaid Category 98**

Title IV-E and Medicaid are two of the programs which provide federal matching funds to the state for children placed in foster care.

Eligibility Requirements: For a child to be eligible for Title IV-E-FC, the following conditions must be present:

- 1) The child must have been removed from the home of a specified relative as a result of court action resulting in findings of Contrary to the Welfare (CTW), Reasonable Efforts to prevent placement (RE) and Placement & Care and;
- 2) The child must have been eligible for Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC), per the 1996 criteria, at the time of initiation of court action leading to placement or would have received AFDC for the month in which court action was initiated had the application for AFDC been made, or

The child lived with a specified relative from whom they were legally removed within six months prior to the month in which court action was initiated and would have received AFDC if application had been made;

- 3) There must be an annual finding of Reasonable Efforts to Finalize the Permanency Plan in court orders; usually following a permanency hearing, and
- 4) The placement must meet the definition of a Title IV-E foster care setting (includes foster homes, relative homes, institutions, group homes etc.) and be licensed following the appropriate background checks.

For youth in foster care beyond age 18, the youth must also meet one of the following criteria:

- Employed at least 80 hours a month, or
- Enrolled in school, or
- Participating in a program designed to improve employability
- Medically unable to do any of the above

Medicaid: Children for whom DCFS has placed in foster care receive a medical card. The physical care costs associated with the children/youth that meet the requirements of Medicaid are claimed by HFS. Currently, behavioral health services are paid by DCFS and claimed to Medicaid by the providers offering the services.

Factors impacting Medicaid Eligibility: Placement type, Residence/Citizenship status and Age. As of Sept 2016, Income is no longer a criteria.

**Note:** All Department child/youth in care (with the exception of children in home of parent (HMP) out of state child/youth in care with access to the other state's card) will be issued an HFS Medical Card through Federal Financial Participation-Technical Support Unit (FFP-TSU) who functions as an HFS local office.

**FEDERAL BENEFITS AND OTHER PUBLIC FUNDS**  
**February 8, 2019 – PT 2019.05**

Temporary Medical Card: When protective custody is taken on a child/youth or a child/youth is court ordered into foster care, the worker must contact the DCFS Medical Card Hotline during regular business hours (Monday through Friday from 8:30 am to 4:45 pm) at 1-800-228-6533 or the Placement Clearance Desk during evenings, weekends and holidays at 217-785-3202 or 1-800-847-2152 to obtain a temporary RIN (Recipient Identification Number) that is to be written by the worker on the CFS 930-C Notice of Medicaid Coverage For DCFS Clients and provided/handed to the Health Screening provider as well as the foster care placement.

This temporary medical card with the child/youth RIN in the CFS 930-C is only to be used until the regular medical card is received by the foster care placement.

Medical Card: Upon the case opening in CYCIS, FFP-TSU will assign the temp RIN to the child in DHS/HFS's system to facilitate claiming of the Health Screening and any initial medical care or prescriptions. FFP-TSU will then initiate a medical card to be mailed to the child/youth at the foster care placement address.

FFP-TSU will respond to changes in placement and Medicaid eligibility information and update DHS/HFS accordingly.

Out of State Placements: When a child/youth in foster care is approved by Interstate Compact for the Placement of Children (ICPC) to move out of state, the foster care placement should contact the local Medicaid office in that state to apply for Medicaid. (IV-E eligible foster children are automatically eligible for Medicaid in the receiving state). If the other state's card is received, FFP-TSU must be notified to cancel the IL card. Should the child/youth return to IL, FFP-TSU will reopen the IL card.

Termination of Medical Card: When the child/youth returns to their parent or their child case is closed, FFP-TSU will either cancel the card or initiate continuing eligibility for up to a year or until the youth turns 19.

Former Foster Care Eligibility: As a result of the Affordable Care Act (ACA), Medicaid eligible youth leaving foster care after age 18 are eligible to receive a medical card until age 26. This does not apply to Adoption or KinGap (Kinship Guardianship Assistance Program) cases.

Application for Benefits Eligibility (ABE) <https://abe.illinois.gov>

Eligibility for the medical card ends at age 21 (unless the youth is in College University Scholarship (CUS) placement). As youth approach age 21, the worker should assist in their access of Former Foster Care Medicaid which provides medical coverage to age 26 for all Medicaid eligible youth in care who left foster care after their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday. There is a process by which DCFS sends lists of youth approaching 21 to HFS. The transition can be complete before the DCFS case closes. See **Procedures 302, Services Delivered by the Department; Section 302.360, Health Care Services (x) Extension of Medical Coverage (Continuous Eligibility), (2) Youth age 19 or older who exit DCFS care.**

**FEDERAL BENEFITS AND OTHER PUBLIC FUNDS**  
**February 8, 2019 – PT 2019.05**

Child/youth in care in receipt of SSI are automatically eligible for Medicaid.

Those children, under age 21, determined to be ineligible for MANG will receive medical coverage via the medical card, but payment for these services will be paid by the State. Refer to **Procedures 302, Services Delivered by the Department; Section 302.360, Health Care Services and Procedures 359, Authorized Child Care Payments; Section 359.90, Payments for Medical Care.**

Medicaid Eligibility – Adoption Assistance and KinGap Cases

Any child leaving foster care with either an adoption or KinGap subsidy is eligible for medical card if the subsidy agreement specifies the medical coverage. The Title IV-E subsidies are automatically eligible for Medicaid.

For families with private insurance, Medicaid will be secondary in compliance with Third Party Liability policies. Should parents or guardians have difficulty using their medical card, they should contact the DCFS Medical Card Hotline at 800-228-6533.

**FEDERAL BENEFITS AND OTHER PUBLIC FUNDS**  
**February 8, 2019 – PT 2019.05**

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**FEDERAL BENEFITS AND OTHER PUBLIC FUNDS**  
**February 8, 2019 – PT 2019.05**

**Appendix B – Child Support**

DCFS is federally required to cooperate with the Title IV-D agency (Health and Family Services -- HFS) to facilitate reimbursement of IV-E and Medicaid eligible costs for youth in care.

HFS-Child Support receives information, via an interface, about all our IV-E and Medicaid eligible child/youth, including assigned worker contact information.

HFS-Child Support staff then issue a Child Support Questionnaire to the assigned worker asking questions about the youth's parents. The assigned worker is expected to complete the questionnaire and return to HFS.

HFS will then prepare legal paperwork for the DCFS Guardian's Office to verify and sign. When this is returned to HFS, they work with the local county courts to facilitate an order of child support by the Courts. These decisions consider the information provided about the parents and the parents' ability to make payments.

HFS-Child Support is responsible for receiving payments and tracking arrearages. As money is received from the parents, HFS-Child Support generates a monthly voucher to DCFS. These monies are placed in the care of Children's Accounts Unit who manages the reimbursement of costs of care at the child level.

Any questions regarding parent's payment obligation should be referred to HFS Child Support Hotline 1-800-447-4278 or to their local office. A list of HFS Child Support Regional Office and additional information regarding Child Support can be found at <https://www.illinois.gov/hfs/ChildSupport>.

DCFS Child Support orders will terminate when the child returns home, youth reaches age 18, case closes or adoptive rights are obtained by DCFS via court termination and/or surrenders. Adoptive Rights based on one or more **Consents** will not cease the child support obligation until the adoption is finalized.

Parents who have had their children returned home should contact HFS Child Support and/or the local family court to have the child support order modified. In rare occasions, the child support is greater than the costs of care. When that happens and the youth is no longer in care, excess child support is forwarded to the youth's guardian or if emancipated, to the youth themselves.

**FEDERAL BENEFITS AND OTHER PUBLIC FUNDS**  
**February 8, 2019 – PT 2019.05**

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